

applicable period alone. Or, the discount may be applied if the user is only registered, instead of applying discount for the predetermined period from the previous order.

If the discount amount is decided this way, the 5 individual file is renewed and is affixed to image data in step S709 and the procedure is stepped to the next process in step S710. Here, the next process means, at the reception counter, from the process of sending the image data to the laboratory to the delivery of the prints to the user in the 10 same manner as the user-centric operation as mentioned before, and at the laboratory, printing the ordered image data and sending the prints to the designated counter.

Taking the above-mentioned steps, the past history of 15 print orders for each image data ordered for prints can be checked.

Regarding the method mentioned so far to determine whether or not the order is placed within the period to which the discount is applicable, there may be a method to compare the date of the previous order added the 20 predetermined period with the date of this time, or conversely, to check whether or not the previous order was placed within the period deducted the prescribed period from the date of this time, or to check whether or not the period from the previous order to the current order is within 25 the prescribed period, among these, the method most suitable to the system operated by the laboratory or the service facilities may be adopted.

CLAIMS

30 1. A print service for providing print of digital image data in response to an order from a user comprising:
a recorder that records reception date of an order from the user and data identifying the user;
a checker that checks whether or not a previous order 35 from the same user is in the record of the recorder within a predetermined period prior to the order of this; and
a charge determiner that deducts a predetermined

amount from the print charge on the order of this time regardless of that on the previous order if the checker finds the previous order in the record.

2. The print service according to claim 1, wherein the 5 predetermined period is less than one month.

3. The print service according to claim 1, wherein the checker includes a comparator that compares the user of the order of this time with the data identifying the user in the record.

10 4. The print service according to claim 1, wherein the checker includes a comparator that finds out a relationship between the data of the order and the reception data in the record in view of the predetermined period.

15 5. The print service according to claim 4, wherein the comparator includes an adder that adds the predetermined period to the reception date in the record to compare it with the date of the order of this time.

20 6. The print service according to claim 4, wherein the comparator includes a subtractor that subtracts the predetermined period from the date of the order of this time to compare it with the reception date in the record.

25 7. The print service according to claim 4, wherein the comparator includes a finder that finds a period between the date of the order of this time and the reception date in the record to compare it with the predetermined period.

8. The print service according to claim 1, wherein the checker checks up if the user used the same print service within the predetermined period.

30 9. The print service according to claim 1 further comprising a reception that receives the order, wherein the checker checks up if the order is through the same reception within the predetermined period.

35 10. The print service according to claim 1, wherein the contents to be recorded by the recorder are attached to the digital image data.

11. The print service according to claim 1, wherein the contents to be recorded by the recorder are embedded

in the digital image data.

12. The print service according to claim 1, wherein a plurality of predetermined periods are prepared in the checker.

5 13. The print service according to claim 12, wherein the charge determiner deducts one of a plurality of predetermined amount from the print charges to cope with one of the predetermined periods.

10 14. A print service for providing print of digital image data in response to an order from a user comprising:
a recorder that records reception date of an order from the user and data identifying the user;

15 a checker that checks whether or not a previous order from the same user is in the record of the recorder within one month prior to the order of this time; and

a charge determiner that deducts an amount from the print charge on the order of this time if the checker finds the previous order in the record.

20 15. The print service according to claim 14 further comprising a reception that receives the order, wherein the checker checks up if the user used the same print service within the predetermined period.

25 16. The print service according to claim 14, wherein the checker checks up if the order is through the same service front within the predetermined period.

17. The print service according to claim 14 further comprising a laboratory system that produces the print in response to the order received through the service front.

30 18. The print service according to claim 14, wherein the contents to be recorded by the recorder are attached to the digital image data.

19. The print service according to claim 14, wherein the contents to be recorded by the recorder are embedded in the digital image data.

35 20. In a print service for providing print of digital image data in response to an order from a user, a laboratory system comprising:

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a recorder that records data identifying the user;
a checker that checks whether or not the user used the
same laboratory system before according to the record;
a determiner that determines the print charge on the
5 order of this time in response to the checker; and
a reporter that reports the outcome of the determiner
to a service front that contacts the user.

21. The laboratory system according to claim 20,
wherein the determiner deducts a predetermined amount from
10 the print charge on the order of this time regardless of
that on the previous order by the same user if it is confirmed
by the checker that the user used the same laboratory system
before.

22. The laboratory system according to claim 20,
15 wherein the service front is apart from the laboratory.

23. The laboratory system according to claim 20,
wherein the checker checks up if the data identifying the
user same as that of the order this time has been recorded
before.

24. The laboratory system according to claim 20
further comprising a second recorder that records the
service front receiving the order, wherein the reporter
reports the service front recorded in the second recorder.

25. The laboratory system according to claim 20
further comprising a second recorder that records the
service front in charge of the delivery of the prints to
the user, wherein the reporter reports the service front
recorded in the second recorder.

26. The laboratory system according to claim 20,
30 wherein the contents to be recorded by the recorder are
attached to the digital image data.

27. The laboratory system according to claim 20,
wherein the contents to be recorded by the recorder are
embedded in the digital image data.

35 28. In a print service for providing a print of digital
image data in response to an order from a user through a
service front, the service front comprising:

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a first recorder that records data identifying the user;

5 a second recorder that records a laboratory system, the service front requesting the recorded laboratory system to produce the print;

a checker that checks whether or not the user used the same service front before according to the record of the first recorder; and

10 a determiner that determines the print charge on the order of this time in response to the checker regardless of the record of the second recorder.

29. The service front according to claim 28 further comprising a requester that requests the print to the laboratory system based on the second recorder.

15 30. The service front according to claim 28 further comprising a receiver that receives a report of a charge determined by the laboratory, and a charging system that charges the user the total amount of the reported charge and the charge determined by the determiner.

20 31. The service front according to claim 28, wherein the service front acts as a reception site that receives an order for printing images from the user.

25 32. The service front according to claim 28, wherein the service front acts as a delivery site that delivers the print output to the user.

30 33. The service front according to claim 28, wherein the determiner determines lower charge if it is confirmed by the checker that an order from the same user was received within a predetermined period prior to the order of this time.

34. The service front according to claim 28, wherein the predetermined period is less than one month.

35 35. The service front according to claim 28, wherein the checker checks up if the data identifying the user same as that of the order this time has been recorded before.

36. The service department according to claim 28, wherein the contents to be recorded by the first and second

recorders are attached to the digital image data.

37. The service department according to claim 28, wherein the contents to be recorded by the first and second recorders are embedded in the digital image data.